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FACT SHEET: What You Need to Know About Landscape Lighting and Mandatory Licensing

Landscape lighting is used to enhance the outdoor décor of both residential commercial areas. But in order to be safe and effective, it must be properly installed. The Department of Consumer Protection is responsible for licensing all occupational tradespersons who perform work in the state of Connecticut. Landscape lighting falls under the State's legal definition of Electrical Work* and therefore, landscaping lighting installers need electrical training and licensure.

What's Involved in Outdoor Lighting?

For outdoor use, 12 volt lamps and 120 volt lighting are appropriate. A transformer is necessary in order to convert 120 volt to 12 volt. Any wiring used for 120 volt lighting has to be buried in ground and secured in a protective conduit. 120 volt lamps and connectors have to be completely waterproof to avoid electrical shock where water is present. **These low voltage and 120 volt systems must be installed by a licensed electrical contractor and local permits must be taken out for installation.**

Under Connecticut law, the only lighting that can be installed **without** a license are:

- pre-wired and pre-fabricated factory enclosed transformers without any terminations or splices, that can be plugged into an outdoor electrical outlet previously installed by a licensed electrician; AND
- Individual solar-powered lamps.

*Connecticut General Statute, Section 20-330(2) defines **Electrical Work** as: "the installation, erection, maintenance, alteration or repair of any wire, cable, conduit, busway, raceway, support, insulator, conductor, appliance, apparatus, fixture or equipment that generates, transforms, transmits or uses electrical energy for light, heat, power or other purposes, but does not include low voltage wiring, not exceeding twenty-four volts, used within a lawn sprinkler system."

Licensing Requirements for Landscape Lighting Installers

State law requires all electricians and electrical contractors to be licensed with the Department of Consumer Protection. It is a violation of State law for a person to install or offer to install a landscape lighting system unless he or she has first obtained a license, as provided in Section 20-333 of the Connecticut General Statutes, or possesses a card of registration from the Labor Department.

The following is the minimum required licensure for persons who perform Landscape lighting systems. (Low voltage).

Limited electrical contractor's license (L-5).

The holder of this license may perform only work limited to low voltage, (25 volts or less), alarm or signal work, audio and sound systems. Two (2) years as a properly licensed journeyman or at least four (4) years of equivalent experience and training are required to qualify for this license examination.

Limited electrical journeyman's license (L-6).

The holder of this license may perform only work limited to low voltage, alarm or signal work, audio and sound systems, and only while employed by a contractor licensed for such work. The voltage of the system is not to exceed 25 volts or five amperes, where such work commences at an outlet receptacle or connection previously installed by a person holding the proper electrical license. The requirements to qualify for this license examination include completion of a registered apprenticeship program or at least two (2) years of equivalent experience and training.

The owner or controlling partner of a business that performs landscape lighting does not need to hold either of the licenses indicated above. However, all of the landscape lighting and electrical work and services set forth in section 20-330 of the Connecticut General Statutes must be performed only by persons licensed for such work, as specified above...

A home improvement registration and/or an irrigation license **do not** qualify anyone to install low voltage landscape lighting. For the purposes of an overall landscape lighting project, a home improvement registration, or an irrigation contractor license **only** allows that contractor to sub-contract the actual lighting installation to a properly licensed electrical contractor.

Important Note to Licensees: Your occupational license number is important verification that you are in fact properly licensed for the jobs you are taking. You must display your license number in all advertising and on all work vehicles.

Penalties

Any person found in violation of Connecticut General Statute Section 20-330 will be fined up to two hundred dollars for each violation, and face civil penalties imposed by the Electrical Board of \$1,000 for a first violation, \$1,500 for a second violation and \$3,000 for each violation occurring within three years.

Resources

License Applications and Statutes www.ct.gov/dcp and select Occupational Licensing from the menu on the right side of the screen
Examination Information website: www.psiexams.com

Tips for Homeowners

For any questions, to verify the license of a contractor or to check on complaints: www.ct.gov/dcp or call 860-713-6110

Homeowners are ultimately responsible for the building permit. It is illegal for contractors to start the work without a building permit in place. Always call your local building department for advice and guidance before any work begins.

Always check to make sure the contractor has proper insurance. The contractor should have liability insurance for themselves and their employees as well as worker's compensation if they have employees.

Guarantees and Warranties - Workmanship warranties are usually good only if they are in writing. The written warranty is only as good as the contractor standing behind it. Always require any written warranties from the manufacturers on materials be provided before final payment is made and keep them in a safe place.